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12-18-1958

### Editorial on Montana Grizzly difficulties

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#### Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Editorial on Montana Grizzly difficulties" (1958). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 375.  
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FROM: BOB GILLULY  
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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

121858

(Note: The following opinions are those of the editor alone, and do not necessarily follow the thinking or the policy of the Montana University athletic department. These comments are designed to serve as background material to interested Montana readers.)

#### EDITORIAL COMMENT

Montana State University has failed "to keep up with the Joneses" in athletic matters, and any discerning Grizzly fan will readily admit that the situation will probably get worse before it improves.

The problem of supporting athletic teams capable of keeping Montana in the Skyline Conference is manifold, but basically it involves:

1. The fact that every other school in the Conference is budgeting more and more funds for athletics. Montana and Utah State University currently are operating on the lowest budgets in the league.
2. The very valid question of whether it is necessary to involve a school in a "crash" program of speeding up athletics.

Montana University lies somewhere in between these divergent points. Most Montanans will admit that they'd "like to see winning teams at the University." But, the success of any athletic program is directly proportionate to the amount of money allocated, and most fans at the present time aren't willing to spend more money.

This lack of money is the key factor. The University, for example, has enough money budgeted to support 60 football scholarships. Wyoming University carries 120 football scholarships, New Mexico has 90, and every other school in the Skyline except Utah State is ahead of Montana in money available for grants-in-aid.

Students and alumni at these other schools aren't asked to carry a disproportionate share of the load. In the case of Montana, however, the Century Club, which is largely an alumni organization, contributes more money percentagewise than

(more)



any similar group in the Conference. From a dollar standpoint, the Century Club contributes an amount exceeded by few alumni groups in the entire west.

While the student athletic fee at Montana may be lower than average, the fee is not significantly lower. It should be noted, however, that the actual dollar total derived from student fees is considerably smaller at Montana than elsewhere in the Conference, for the reason that enrollment is smaller.

Other Skyline institutions, then, are benefitting from more student money and from higher appropriations from the institution itself. This, of course, is proportionate to a larger student body and greater gate receipts.

But the fact remains that MSU hasn't kept up with the times, athletically speaking. When Montana withdrew from the Pacific Coast Conference in 1950, most Grizzly fans drew a sigh of relief and commented that "now the University can compete in a league its size."

But, in eight short years, the University has again fallen behind. The other conference schools have increased their budgets, yet MSU has not grown in proportion.

Perhaps this is not bad. There are valid arguments against a high-powered athletic program.

But, sure as breezes blow out of Hellgate Canyon, Grizzly athletic fortunes will not improve under the present budget setup. It's time for all Montanans to decide whether the University should actively compete in a solid athletic program, or else fall by the wayside. The only kind of record that is likely to result from the latter decision is a continuation of the losing streak that was such a painful feature of the Grizzlie's last football season.

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